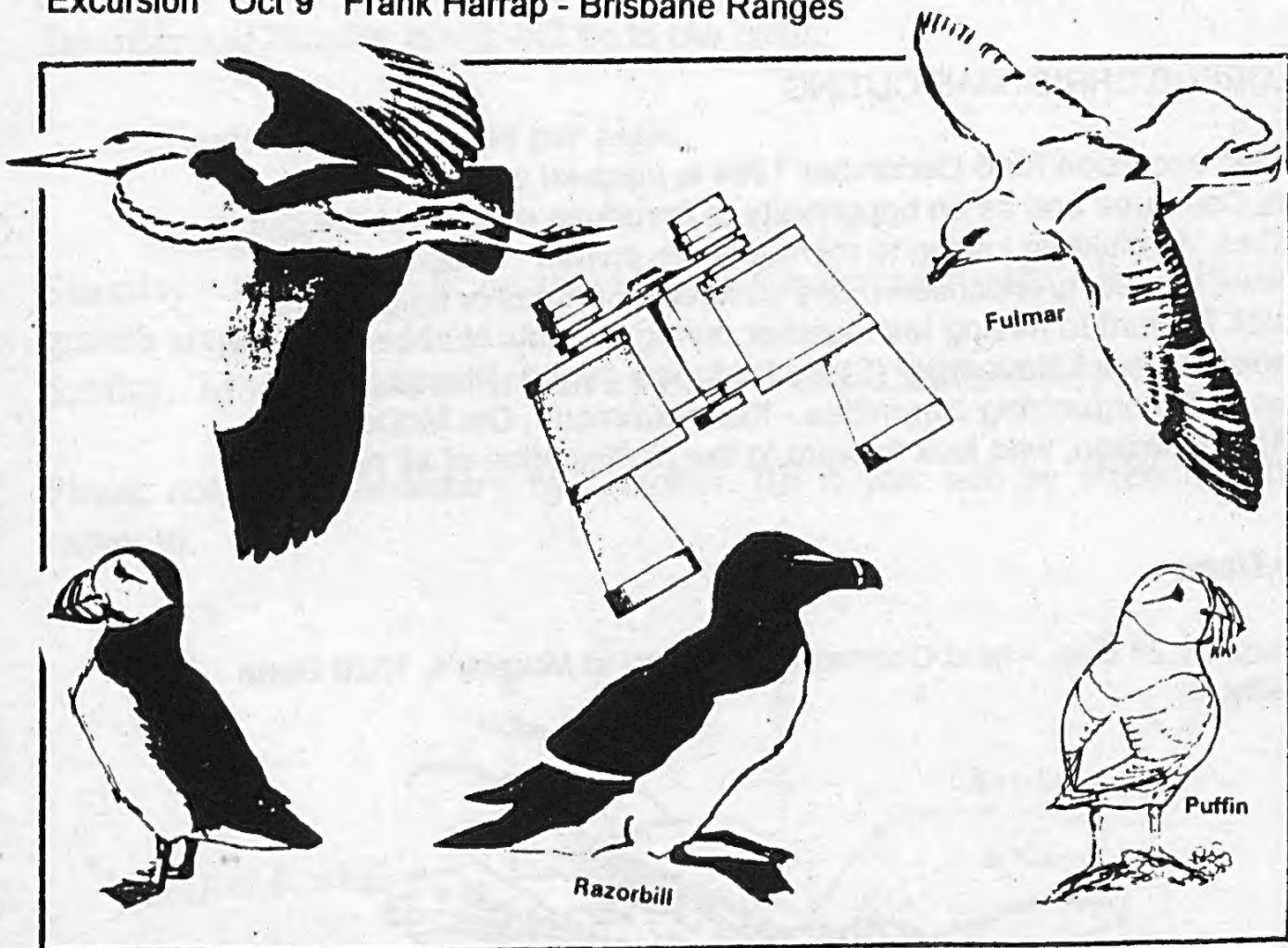


SEPTEMBER 1994

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat Incorporated

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting Sep 2 Ken McDonnell - Birds of Slimbridge and the Farne Islands.
- Meeting Oct 7 Gary Bennison - Algae
- Excursion Sep 4 Pat Murphy and Castlemaine FNC - Mt. Egerton and Whipstick.
- Excursion Sep 25 Frank Harrap - Wombat Forest
- Excursion Oct 9 Frank Harrap - Brisbane Ranges



President: Mr J Gregurke Ph:
Secretary: Mrs M Rotheram
Treasurer: Mr G Binns
Editor: Mr A Dyson

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street Sth, Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m. EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM BOOK CITY, cnr STURT AND ARMSTRONG STS, BALLARAT at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTING: OR at 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY.

Field Reports

Greg Binns - A Brush Cuckoo in his garden in Pleasant St. Buff tailed Thornbills seen at Mount Beckworth.

Ken Hammond and Ken McDonnell - observations of feeding habits - blackbird, raven and mudlark tending to use "claw and pull" method of feeding on meat. The butcherbirds have been seen to jam meat into a tree fork and strip it.

Alan Morrison - Pair of Grey Fantails in sheltered spot on a windy day.

Claire Dalman and Stephanie Davison - Eastern Rosellas now more common in suburban areas.

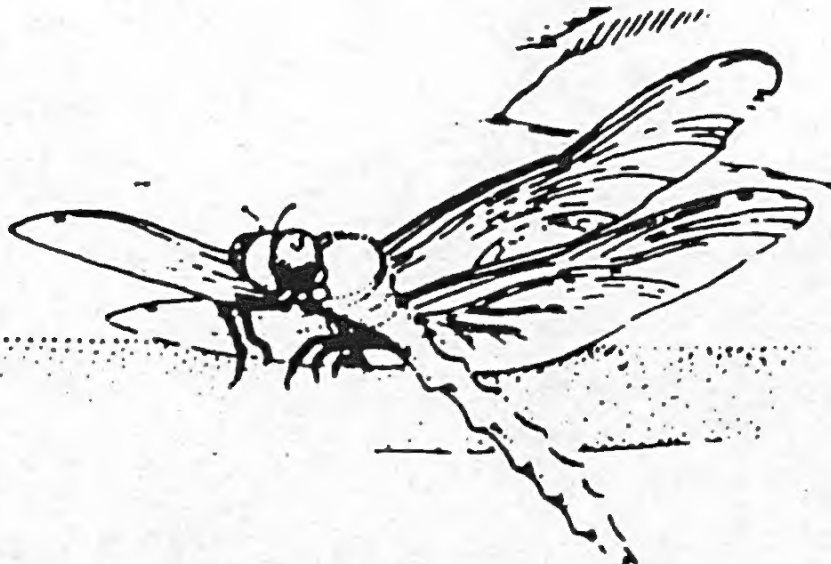
Ken McDonnell - About 60 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos at Invermay. Magpies are now nesting.

CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS OUTING

The club excursion for 6 December 1994 is planned as a visit to the Mount Cole area and as an opportunity to introduce children to the club's activities. All children known to members are invited - daughters, sons, nephews, nieces, grandchildren and children of friends or neighbours. We look forward to having tea together during the day. Numbers need to be known by the 4 November (Stella Bedgood Night). Please give names to the organizing committee - Ken Hammond, Del McDonnell and Alan Morrison, who look forward to the participation of all members.

Diary Dates

Wednesday 28 Sep. - next Committee Meeting at Murphy's,



ENCB Club Campout

November 18-20, 1994

All club members and friends are invited to the Club Campout to be held at "Yarramalong", Rilen's Road, Muckleford. This is adjacent to the Muckleford Forest.

There is bunk room style accommodation with mattress, pillow, pillow case and bottom sheet provided. Supply your own blankets or sleeping bag. There is a kitchen and lounge area to allow us to cater for our meals, and a barbecue and campfire outside. Bring your own food; Saturday and Sunday lunch will be in the bush.

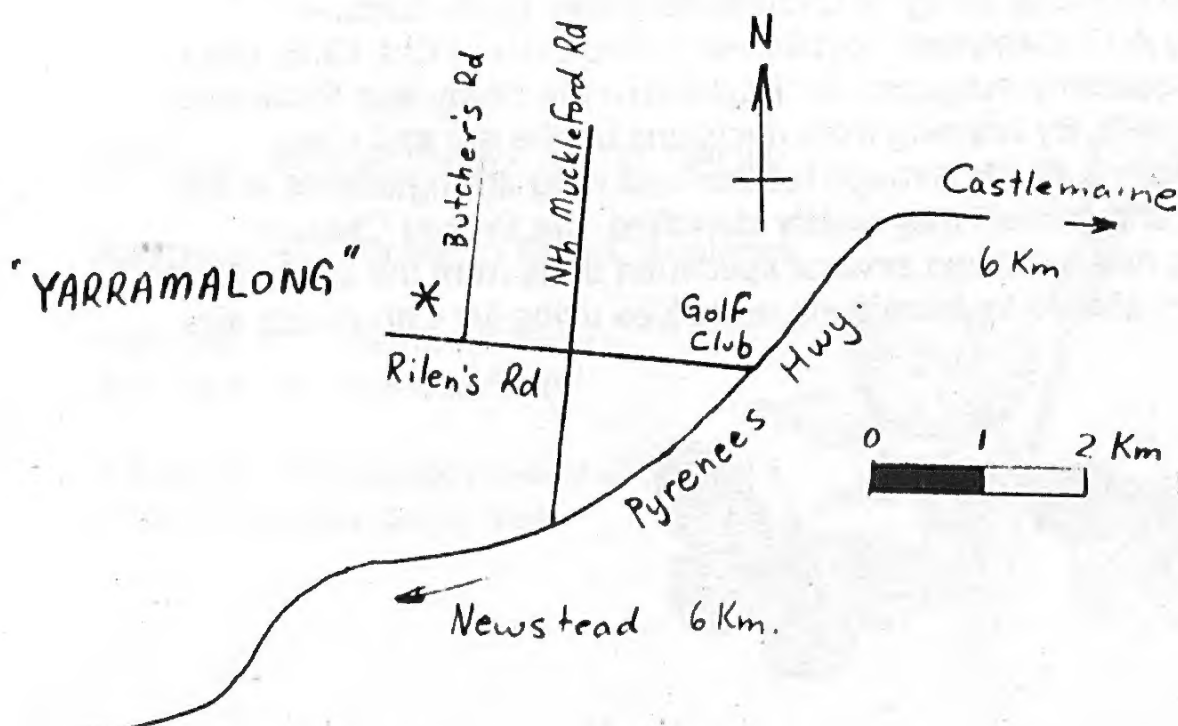
Cost: \$12 per person per night.

Program:

Saturday: Kalimna Park on the edge of Castlemaine. Mt Alexander - a granite area east of Harcourt.

Sunday: Muckleford Forest lead by Ern Perkins, Castlemaine FNC.

Please notify the Secretary by October 7th if you will be attending the campout.



MEMBERS SPECIAL INTERESTS NIGHT

Alison Dalman - Alison was a member of an Earthwatch group working in the Atherton Tablelands. She showed us several slides concerned with their investigation of the diversity of insects - most of which had not been identified - eg of the 69 species of spiders known 68 were unnamed.

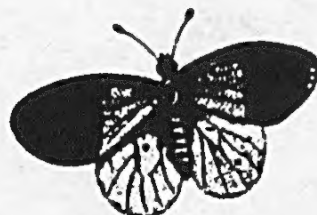
Carol Hall - a fascinating slide/talk on the Otter Trust at Earsham in Norfolk (UK) and the Bird of Prey Centre at Laxfield further south. The otter program was set up about 20 years ago when it was estimated there were only half a dozen of the animals in East Anglia - now they are breeding. Most are kept for breeding but several are being released into local waters. Some are now being sent to the Continent where they have been dying out.

Alan Morrison - slides taken on a northern trip. The strange mound springs of Blanche Cup off the Oodnadatta Track. An old nest (estimated 20 to 30 years old) of the Stick Rat (extinct on the mainland) taken at Copper Hills Homestead north of Coober Pedy. Ghost gums and the red rock soils of the Arckaringa Hills.

Ken McDonnell - Ken showed several slides taken during FNCRB excursions - swans and ibis at Moorabool Reservoir. Purple hardenbergia, creeping mistletoe, twining glycine. Spectacular views of the Ledergerg River in the Wombat Forest.

Helen Burgess - pictures taken during a trip to New Zealand. The mud at Rotorua rather like the mound springs shown by Alan.

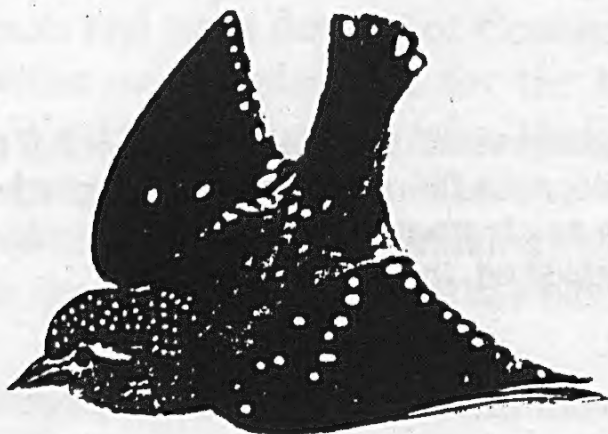
Greg Binns - Greg and Frank and sample bird led us through a bird identification exercise using "A Dichotomous Key to the Birds of Australia" by A.G. Campbell - published in The Emu of Oct 1905. (The Emu was a quarterly magazine to "Popularise the Study and Protection of Native Birds"). By hopping from decisions on the toe and claw configurations via flights through feather and wing arrangements to bill types, sizes and colours they neatly identified the Scarlet Chested Parrot. Greg had borrowed several specimen birds from the BUC which we were later able to try identifying ourselves using Mr Campbell's key.



Stephanie Davison and John Gregurke - We were all pleased to see and hear some of the slides and text produced by the Lake Wendouree Project Committee (see Stephanie's article in the August newsletter). A most impressive selection and we congratulate John, Greg, Pat, Bill and Stephanie for their professional work - and look forward to watching the completed slide set. Excellent pictures of the seasonal changes at the lake.

Lyndsay Fink - We took a (slide) trip with Lyndsay and his family by horse and wagon/caravan through the Strezlecki Range area - mostly ex farming country - now with luxurious growth of Messmates, Mountain Ash, Blackwood and Blue Gum. Much planting has been done by the Morwell River Prison Camp. During the bushfires of 1939 much of the area - including small townships, was burnt out. All that remains of the settlement of Gonyah is a cypress "hedge", now many metres high. The hedge was the only part of Gonyah to escape the flames.

VD



ANGAIR WILDFLOWER & ART SHOW

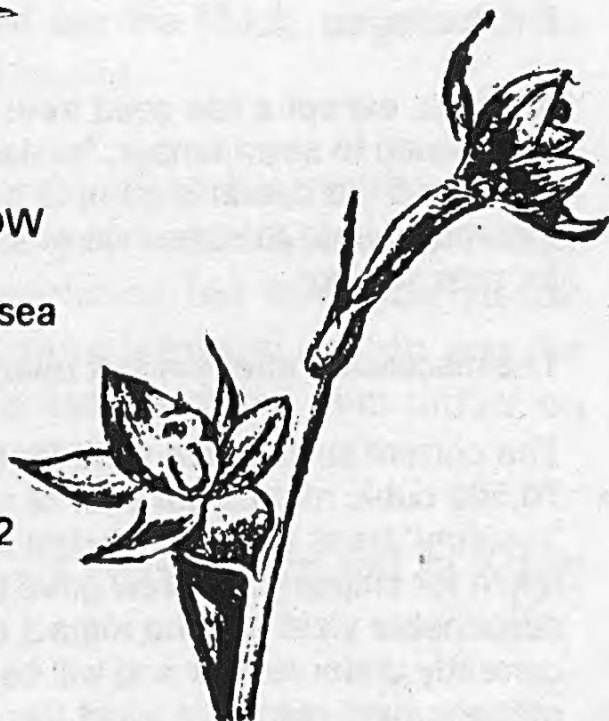
Anglesea Hall McMillan Street, Anglesea

Sat Sep 17 10am to 5.30pm

Sun Sep 18 10am to 5pm

Adults \$4 Pensioners and students \$2

Children 12 and under free



Wombat Forest Logging

Andrew Maclean (DCNR)

Andrew Maclean addressed the club on Members Night in response to a letter from Margaret Rotheram regarding logging practices in the Wombat State Forest.

Andrew has a leading role in the preparation of the Forest Management Plan for the Midlands area of which the Wombat Forest is a substantial part.

There are three timber harvesting methods potentially available for native forest such as the Wombat:

1. Selective Logging

Class 1 sawlogs only are removed and the remaining trees allowed to develop, however these tend to be the less vigorous. Cleared areas regenerate slowly due to shading and the net result is an apparent progression to a lower quality forest. Environmental disturbance is minimum.

2. Shelterwood

All trees (except the Class 1) are harvested. Regeneration is better than in the case of selective logging because there is less ground - shading but environmental disturbance is much greater. After about 15 years, when the new growth is well established, the Class 1 trees are selectively removed.

3. Clearfelling

All trees, except a few seed trees, are felled. Sawlogs are used for conversion to sawn timber, "residual" logs are chipped for hardboard or paper and the debris is burnt to simulate forest wildfire. Regeneration is vigorous due to the absence of shading leading to the greatest potential for new sawlogs.

The discussion after the talk revealed some interesting points:

The current sustainable yield for the Midlands forest area is defined as 70,500 cubic metres per year of sawlogs only. The surrounding "residual" trees are not included in this and in the clearfelling regime are taken for chipping. Andrew gave the impression that the calculation of sustainable yield and the impact of logging on environmental values is currently under review and will be included in the draft forest management plan. We await this plan with interest.

AED

Linton Excursion

Sunday 7th August, 1994

Rain, hail, snow, sunshine! These were the conditions experienced during the working bee at the Linton flora and fauna block. Rabbit burrows were blocked and poisoned. We concentrated on the north-east section of the block which had not been treated last year. Good control of the rabbits has been achieved in the areas treated previously, with few burrows being reopened. Heaps of soil and stumps along fencelines harbour many burrows which are difficult to fumigate. These may need to be cleaned up by burning. A few Cootamundra wattle trees were located and removed. There has been no germination of seed around the Cootamundra's eliminated last year. Only minor work was necessary to clean up some regrowth of blackberries on the mullock heap near the gate.

While searching for rabbit burrows there was time to admire the bright colours and large flowers of Common Correa. We found most of the 13 wattles on the plant list for the block. Those flowering were Spreading Wattle *Acacia genistifolia*, Hedge Wattle *A. paradoxa*, Woolly Wattle *A. lanigera*, and Myrtle Wattle *A. myrtifolia*. Other wattles will flower as spring approaches. A patch of Nodding Greenhoods *Pterostylis nutans* was flowering at the back of the block.

A large population of wallabies must use the block. Signs of their presence includes rest areas, droppings and tracks.

After the working bee we drove west of Linton on the disused Ballarat-Skipton Railway. We located the old Linton Reservoir. The water is deep and clear without much vegetation but two Australasian Grebe were swimming on the water. An item of historical interest was the culvert underneath the railway line which is lined with red gum timber on all four sides.

Thanks to all those who attended the working bee and to Kevin Knight who donated the fumigation tablets. JG.

Australian Native Mammals

The Potoroo Family

Order Diprotodonta Super Family Macropodoidea

Family Potoroidae

Potorous tridactylus Long-nosed Potoroo

These animals are usually lumped under the uninviting name of Rat Kangaroos. The only one near to Ballarat is the Long-nosed Potoroo and it is found near the coastal areas and as such I will not list it as being in the Ballarat area but mention it for interests sake only.

There are two animals once found in the Ballarat area, now sadly extinct here but still found in Tasmania. The first is *Bettongia gaimardi* which probably became extinct in the early part of the twentieth century. It liked the open plains close to the dry sclerophyll forests with moist gullies. Its food was mostly fungi, seeds, roots and bulbs. Bettongs made ovoid shaped nests with an end opening. The material was carried in the tail. It was a strictly nocturnal animal travelling up to 1.5 km in an area of up to 135 hectares.

The second animal was the Pademelon, *Thylogale billardieri* from the Macropodidae Family. These small animals fed on short green grasses and herbs, occasionally supplemented by browsing from woody plants. They also liked the open plains close to dry sclerophyll forests to wet sclerophyll forests with moist gullies and patches of sedge. In all these habitats they formed well defined and regularly used runways. Pademelons were most numerous in these clearings with as many as ten or more individuals, rarely going more than 100 m from the forest edge. They would however travel up to 2 km through the forest. The home range could be up to 170 hectares.

Both these animals are found in Tasmania. Bettongs are classed as common and Pademelons are abundant - there is an open season on Pademelons.

Elfin



Bettongia gaimardi